A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

On *Tuesday*, June 20*th*. 1665.

Being the Day of

SOLEMN THANKSGIVING

For the late

VICTORY at SEA.

By *J. DOLBEN* D. D. Dean of WESTMINSTER, and Clerk of the Closet.

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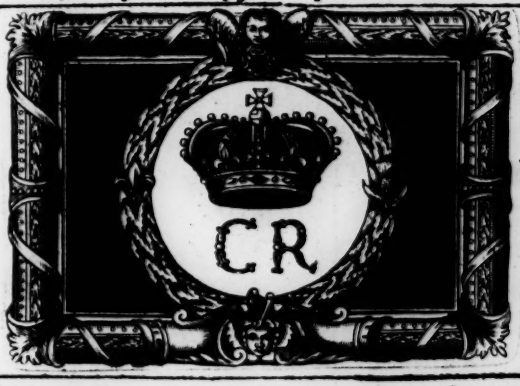

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

PSAL. 54. Verſ. 6, 7.

6. *An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praiſe thy Name, O Lord: Becauſe it is ſo comfortable.*

7. *For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble: and mine eye hath ſeen his deſire upon mine enemies.*

HAving the Honour to ſerve the Devotions of the *King* and the Court in their joynt *Thankſgiving* to God for a Victory: I have taken the Theme of my Diſcourſe from the mouth of a *King*, who was the greateſt *Conqueror*, and withal, the greateſt *Maſter* and Example of *Devotion* recorded in holy Scripture. A Prince, who with the ſame ſpirit and affection led his People in their *Battels*, and in all

 their

their Acts of Worſhip and *Religion*; Went In and Out before the Congregation as conſtantly to the *Tabernacle* as the *Camp*. And therefore, as the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament (a good part whereof are but *Davids* Commentaries, ſhort and ſummary Memorials of his glorious Atchievements,) afford matter enough for the admiration of Captains and Commanders in War: So is his Book of *Pſalms* a rich Treaſure and Magazine of Heavenly Meditations, where every Pious Soul may find ſomewhat ſuited to its condition, fit to aſſiſt its infirmities, and improve it's Graces. If we can, as S. *Auguſtine* adviſeth, form our ſouls by the affection of the *Pſalm*, tune our hearts to the *Aire* and ſpirit of *Davids* raptures, we ſhall meet in theſe Divine Compoſitions, that which is able to kindle Zeal, inflame Love, mellow and impregnate holy Sorrow for ſin; to give Wings to our Prayers, and carry our Petitions with ſpeed and force into Heaven; to animate and enliven our Praiſes, and make our *Hallelujahs* like thoſe of Angels and Beatified Spirits; To actuate all the good Reſolutions which any of theſe Affections, our Love, our Fear, the ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, or Gods abundant Mercies, have begun in our hearts.

a Pſal. 30.

In ſuch plenty and variety, I could not be long to ſeek for words proper to our preſent occaſion: And ſuch will this Pſalm appear to be; A *Pſalm* of

of *Inſtruction*; ſo the TITLE calls it, teaching us in few words how we ought to demean our ſelves in a *War*, for the procuring good ſucceſs to our Armies, and making that ſucceſs happy to us when we have obtained it.

In the three firſt Verſes, *David* being ſought for by his Enemies (as we lately were by ours) *prayes againſt them*; That was his *Courſe*; He always began his Conflict with God, contending and wreſtling with Him for a bleſſing and aſſiſtance. He durſt not lift up his hands even againſt the Enemies of God (yet what durſt not *David* do?) till he had firſt lifted them up in humble Supplication to the Lord his ſtrength, *Who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight.* Pſal. 144. 1. This being done, his Courage breaks out like Lightning, he doubts not of *ſlaying* his *Thouſands* and *Ten Thouſands*. So in the 4*th*. and 5*th*. Verſes, he becomes his own Prophet, promiſing himſelf Victory. For who can reſiſt him, who hath *Omnipotence* for his Second? Or how can any Enemy maintain a Fight againſt that Captain, who hath before-hand defeated and broken their Forces by his Prayers, aſſur'd his Conqueſt before he put on his Armor. Then in the laſt Verſes, which are my Text, *David* concludes where he began, thankfully acknowledgeth Gods goodneſs in his Deliverance, and the Diſſipation of his Enemies, obliging himſelf to a return of dutifull affectionate ſervice, in conſideration of ſo great Mercies

received; and thoſe, as they are the eſſential parts of a *Thankſgiving*, ſo ſhall they be of my *Sermon*.

I will begin with that which is firſt in the order of nature, though laſt in the words; The *Acknowledgment*, which is *double*; of the *Benefit*, and the *Author*: The *Benefit* is likewiſe *two-fold*, conſiſting of a *Deliverance* and a *Victory*: *David* is delivered from all his trouble, all the treacherous plots and attempts of his Adverſaries; And *his eye hath ſeen his deſire upon thoſe Adverſaries*; and of all this, *God* is confeſſed the ſole Author. *He hath delivered me, &c.*

I Am to begin with the *Benefit* acknowledged, and with that part of it which is here called *Deliverance*; and that being in *Davids* caſe, not a *Reſcue* from actual miſchief or diſtreſs, but only a diverſion of a *Danger* coming toward him, is ſuch a *Negative mercy*, as we ſeldom trouble our ſelves to conſider, much leſs to acknowledge and give thanks for: How many hundreds of Perils hath every one of us eſcaped, in our Perſons, Fame, and Fortunes, which we never dreamt of? The watchful Providence of God maintaining a continual guard over us, waking and caring for our good, while we ſleep, and perhaps neglect both our ſelves and him that keeps us. Would we but meditate a little upon the infinite accidents occurring in the courſe of things, the infirmities of our

our natural frame and temper, with the nice and curious contexture of our parts, the conſequences of our Diſorders, the malice of our enemies, and of the Devil; all or any of which, may eaſily ſhorten our days, or make them miſerable: And from hence admit theſe two evident *Deductions*; 1. That in this eſtate it is morally impoſſible for a man to continue *one* day, were not the goodneſs of God particularly intent upon his Preſervation. 2. That it is a double mercy to be kept from *danger*, and from the *knowledge* of it too: Becauſe had we a diſtinct apprehenſion of all the evils to which we are obnoxious, our fear and ſollicitude muſt needs be a continual rack and torment to our Souls: This contemplation would (I aſſure my ſelf) cauſe every Perſon here preſent to add in his private *Cloſet-Devotions* one new *Laud* and *Thankſgiving* to God for his Deliverance from the Dangers which he never thought of. But how little ſoever we are affected with theſe unknown Perils and Eſcapes, wherein our eye is not ſharp enough to diſcern the *ſmall thred* by which a *Calamity* hangs over us, or the *hand* that holds it from falling on our heads: Yet when a conſiderable Danger comes cloſe, and ſtares us in the face, when the Clouds gather apace, and the ſky looks black about us, then we apprehend a Storm, and bethink us of a ſhelter and retreat: When death furrounds us, when the *Peſtilence walks in darkneſs*, and the ſword *deſtroyes at noon day*, caſting down *thou-*

ſands

ſands beſides us, and *Ten thouſands at our right hand*, then *Qui habitat in adjutorio*, is a ſeaſonable *Hymn*: Then 'tis a valuable Priviledge to retain unto Providence, and have an Intereſt in Gods favor, that he may defend us *under his wings*, *and we may be ſafe under his feathers*. 'Tis great pitty that after ſuch convictions, ſo devout Applications and faſtning of our Souls unto the hand of God, we ſhould *ſtart like broken bowes*; fall off again from the confeſſed Anchor of our hope: When God ſays *to the Deſtroying Angel, It is enough*, that we ſhould ſay ſo to our ſelves too: If he ſtrike, or our enemies threaten no longer, that we neither pray, nor repent, or praiſe any longer: But as ſoon as ever the skie clears up, and *the light of Gods countenance breaks through*, and diſpells the clouds which had begirt us, the very thought of what hath paſt, ſhould in the ſame moment blow away likewiſe, and we forget that ever we had need of Gods protection, or that he interpoſed to deliver us. *David* did not ſo, he hid himſelf in the *Wilderneſs*; the *Ziphites* bordering upon his retirement diſcover him to *Saul*, who comes with an Army to ſeiſe him, but is diverted and drawn back again by the *invaſion* of the *Philiſtines*: *David* could not let ſuch a preſervation paſs, without compoſing this *Pſalm* before us in memory of it, as he hath done divers other upon the like occaſions, that there may remain an Eternal Monument of his pious and dutiful reſenting God Bleſſings; an indeli-

Pſal. 91.

ble

ble Record and Character of a generous gratitude, which is always paying, and yet always owing, and charging it ſelf with what it payes. All this hath been ſaid, becauſe I doubt not but the great *Deliverance* we *now* celebrate, had many Deliverances in it which we know not; And I fear, leſt we forget ere long thoſe which we do this day own and acknowledge, as we have already too apparently done the *ſtupendious* occaſions of former *Thankſgivings*. Queſtionleſs, ſome miſchiefs were projected, which have eſcaped the vigilance and ſagacity of thoſe who diſquiet themſelves to preſerve our ſecurity: And ſome have been penetrated by their wiſdome, which we of the *many* have no ſenſe of. From all theſe we are freed, (for a while at leaſt) and therefore they ought all to be put upon the account, that our *Thankſgiving* may be compleat and commenſurate to its Cauſes; for otherwiſe, there is enough in our open direct Deliverance, to take up all our Affections, and exerciſe all our Faculties in the beſt acknowledgments we can make.

To conceive it aright, take this *obvious* Truth into your thoughts, That *the greateſt Preparations imaginable may be defeated*; the moſt formidable ſtrength may be diſordered and broken by a thouſand ſlight accidents. Conſider, when two *Armies* meet in the Field, how little inconſiderable things (impoſſible to be prevented or foreſeen) oftentimes

oftentimes turn the *Scale*, and caſt the main iſſue and ſucceſs of a Battel beyond all recovery. And then, contemplate the Fortunes of a Nation put into *Planks* of a few inches thick, expoſed to wind and weather, to the mercy of the Sea, and the danger of their own Proviſions, which *one* ſpark of *Fire* may make more fatal then *all* the Enemies Cannon. And (ſuppoſe theſe various hazards avoided, yet) a Force equal to Themſelves muſt be encountred upon ſo unfaithful footing as the face of the *Ocean* affords: Then tell me, whether to come off ſafe from ſo dreadfull an adventure, be not a Deliverance for which we ought (in the *Pſalmiſt's* Phraſe) *to rejoyce with trembling? Pſal.2.11.* If you ſay, that *every Ship* is a diſtinct and ſeveral *Caſtle*, a new Fort, which will endure a Battery and Siege by it ſelf; and therefore thoſe diſmal *Routs*, which upon the miſcarriage of *one* Troop, ſometimes ruine Land Armies, are not to be feared in a *Navy*, which can diſpute a Victory ſo often over: I muſt return, that we had ſo much of our Intereſt in one Bottome, that we might have bin undone at a *Blow*: I need not ſuppoſe ſuch a ſhot as fired the Enemies *Admiral*: That cruel Bullet, which took off thoſe brave *Noble Perſons*, and came ſo near a *Royal one*, hath taught me, that to be preſerved from ſuch a Danger, to be delivered from all our *Trouble*, eaſed of all our anxieties and pangs of ſoul in ſo deep a Concern, and with no greater

greater loſs upon the whole account, is a deliverance capable of no further addition, to be heightned and advanced by no other acceſſion but this, That God hath compleated the abundance and riches of his Mercy, by giving us together with our own ſafety, a ſignal diſcomfiture of thoſe we fought againſt: *Our eyes have ſeen their deſires upon our enemies*: To the conſideration whereof, I am next to raiſe your Devotions.

AND in this we have great advantage of *David*; for though the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* reads, *Mine eye hath ſeen revenge*, as We, *Mine eye hath ſeen his deſire upon mine enemies*; Yet neither doth the original (which always expreſſeth things very conciſely) tell us *what David* ſaw upon his *Enemies*; nor do we find in the Hiſtory of the Fact, that he ſaw much harm betide them. The treacherous contrivance of the *Ziphites* was eluded; *Saul* was called off by a ſuddain irruption of the *Philiſtines*; and *David* had the pleaſure to behold that Army which came to ſwallow him and his little company, and had even opened their jaws upon them, march away in haſt to other more equall encounters; this was a delightful Proſpect to him, but of no great damage to his Enemies: They ſuffered a diſappointment, made conſiderable by their expectations and malicious Purpoſes; but without any real detriment, ſo far were they

from ſuffering great havock or ſlaughter; indeed the World was not then capable of *ſuch* Tragedies as we have ſeen; the *Arts* and *Engines* of *Deſtruction*, were but rude and imperfect in their firſt eſſayes and deſignes; Miſchief was not yet grown skilful enough to convey Death at the diſtance of miles; to tear men and their ſtrongeſt defences like raggs; to break a floating Caſtle as eaſily as the thinneſt bubble in that water where it ſwimms; killing a competent Army at one blaſt, nay, almoſt annihilating them and all their furniture; making a ſhip which a Province *cannot* ſet out in a year, as *inviſible* in one moment, *as the Atoms of the Aire*; Men had not yet inſpired the Element of Fire, with their malice and witty managery of miſchief; had not taught inanimate flames ſuch a rational conduct of themſelves, as to aſſault and apply their fury to a cluſter of ſhips, ſticking like *Dejaneira's Shirt* to every one of them, till they perfect the ruine enjoyn'd them, and actuate all the wiſhes of thoſe by whom they are employed: There was not in *Davids* time means to effect, nor could the world in thoſe days furniſh out an *Armada* conſiderable enough to ſuffer ſuch an overthrow as we have ſeen. But although *David* ſaw leſs then we, yet perhaps his eyes ſaw as much as we ought to deſire to ſee upon our enemies; to behold their *Deſigns* fruſtrated, their Preparations vainly *ſpent*, their Forces *diſabled* from hurting us. What ought a Chriſtian

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ſtian to deſire more? Far be it from a Follower of *Chriſt*, a Diſciple of his meekneſs, a Son of his charity, to feed his eyes with horrid Spectacles, to delight in miſchief, and entertain himſelf with Feaſts of Blood, the Repaſts and *Banquets of Devils*: God forbid, they who profeſs it their duty to love and cheriſh their very enemies, ſhould imitate the execrable ferity of *Hannibal*, who viewing a ditch full of *Roman Blood*, applauded the *lovelineſs* of the fight; or that diabolical temper of *Vitellius*, who profeſſed the ſtench and killing *ſavour of enemies Carkaſſes*, to be an odour and perfume more grateful then all the Gums and Spices of the East. Should our *eyes thus offend us*, 'twere good literally *to pull them out*; much more profitable to want all our ſenſes, then that by them ſo much of Hell ſhould be let into our Souls: This hath ſo far affected ſome excellent men in the firſt and beſt Ages of the Church, as to make them conclude all War unlawful under the Goſpel; and you know [redacted] *among us* (God wot very unlike them) who profeſs the ſame belief; I ſhould be ſorry to ſee them *tried with ſuch an opportunity of fighting* as they wiſh, and I fear lately expected: But if *war* be now *unlawful*, then the *Chriſtian Magiſtrate* beareth *the Sword in vain* (which yet St. *Paul* ſayeth he does not) it being poſſible that an Army may be as needful to procure the execution of Juſtice, upon *ſtrong Thieves*, and numerous Murderers, as the *Sheriffs Halberts* are to guard a

Plutarch.

Suetonius. Tacit.

there a

Rom. 13. 4.

Common Hangman. I could heartily wish, the Commands of Christ were so universally and so sincerely obey'd, that there might be no need of *Armies*, nor of *Courts* of Justice; no use of *Bonds* or *Mortgages*, to secure the honesty of one Christian to another; which must certainly be the Case, if men having imbibed the Doctrine of Christ into their hearts, and being thereby instructed in their Duty, would do it, *Not for wrath, but Conscience sake*. Yet seeing this is hopeless in the dreggs of a corrupted World, the End must be obtained as it may; We must pray for our *Princes*, that *under them*, by the protection of their Power, and their Arms, we *may live peaceably and quietly in all Godliness and Honesty*; and that God will bless and prosper their Wars, which are not only *just*, but *charitable* also, when they undertake to punish wrong Doers, that they may be able to cherish and defend them who do well. And if it be lawful to *make* War, it must be lawful to *prose[illegible]* to weaken and disable, nay and to Destroy those whom no fair course will bring to reason: And what we may so endeavor as to hazard our own lives for the procuring, we may with all doubt rejoyce in when we have it; so that we are thus far sure, it is an innocent and honest satisfaction to *see our desire upon our enemies*: We may and must be affected with such publick Benefits; and he is unworthy to *breath in England*, whose heart does not exult and triumph, that the Pride of our

our inſolent *Enemies* is in ſome meaſure mortified, their Injuſtice chaſtiſed, their vain *Rhodomontades* returned upon them with ſhame and confuſion, and their real extraordinary ſtrength on which they bare themſelves ſo high, become no further uſeful, then to embelliſh our Trophies, and ennoble our Victory; to make the KINGS *Name* more glorious, and the *Bravery* of thoſe who *Commanded* his *Navy* more conſpicuous then otherwiſe they would have been.

The *Caution* then muſt be, That we rejoyce in our *Victory ſoberly*, and uſe it *mercifully*: Not fixing our delight directly upon the Calamity of our Enemies, (for what can be more unnatural, then to make Sorrow the Object of Joy?) but receiving it by reflexion from the advantage reſulting thence to our own Condition. So *Lucretius* obſerves, that Men apprehend a Contentment in ſeeing from the ſhore, *a Ship toſt in a Tempeſt*; not that he ſuppoſeth any ſo inhumane as to be pleaſed with the Danger and Miſery of others; but ſuch a compariſon ſets off and endears their own ſafety to them. Such a Pleaſure I would preſcribe you in *this Caſe*, as *Merchants* have when they haſtily caſt out their Goods to ſave a Ship; Or wounded *Souldiers* when they reward a Chirurgian for cutting *off* their Limbs to prevent the conſequences of a *Fever* or a *Gangreen*: Theſe are called *mixt acts* of the Will, being compounded of ſatisfaction and regret.

regret. For 'tis impoſſible a man ſhould deſire to loſe the effects of an *Indian* Voyage, be delighted in ſeeing the fruits of ſo much toil and hazard periſh in a moment: Yet when he hath even at that rate redeemed his *Life*, he thinks the great and hardly gotten Treaſure unhappily but profitably expended. And no man ſo *hates his own fleſh*, as to be glad to ſee it mangled and torn from him; But yet he loves the *Knife*, and applauds the *Skill*, which takes off a Member to ſave the Body, bemoaning nevertheleſs the neceſſity of that method. If you conſider, that every Man is nearer to us then our Goods, *Bone of our Bone*, and *Fleſh of our Fleſh*, and every Chriſtian is our *fellow-Member* in that Body whereof *Chriſt is the Head*; We ſhall never behold the miſeries of ſuch Relations, but with that tenderneſs and *ſympathy* wherewith the *firſt* Fathers of the Church looked on thoſe whom they charitably puniſhed, ſatisfying themſelves in the good effects of their Cenſures both publick and private, the affrighting others from imitating what they ſaw ſo condemned, and correcting the offenders themſelves by their ſufferings; *delivering them to Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that their ſouls might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus*; But yet leading them out to the execution of their ſentence with *Tears*, and groans, and compaſſionate mournings, as we read frequently in ancient Chriſtian Authors, and

1 Cor. 5. 5.

St.

St. *Paul* intimates to us, in many places of his Epiſtles; and in truth, had they not had ſuch affections, they had *excommunicated themſelves* together with theſe Sinners, cut their own Souls off from that eſſential Charity which is the Life and Soul of our Profeſſion, the only tye and bond which knits and holds us together in our real internal Chriſtian Communion, while they ſeparated others from outward Participation in the Churches Rites and Offices. If you think it hard thus to abſtract the cauſe from the men, and to govern thoſe affections which are inſeparable from the eſtate of War, by ſuch nice diſtinctions; I muſt acknowledge that it is no ordinary pitch of vertue which Chriſtianity aimes at; thoſe Divine Inſtructions, Examples, Motives and Helps, given us by *Our Saviour*, were not intended to produce little and trivial things in *us*; but though perfection be not eaſie, yet ſincerity and honeſt endeavor is: Me thinks it ſhould be poſſible, not to indulge to that *Paſſion* which you are not at leiſure to mortifie, much more to direct it to a right object, which is that I require. And after all, I can tell you of a Heathen, who ſays that a Judge condemning and executing a Man-ſlayer with delight, becoms himſelf a Murderer, and is formally guilty of the crime that he puniſheth: Now every one that makes *War*, aſſumes the Perſon of a *Judge*, undertaking by force to do himſelf that right, which he can no other way obtain; Where-

1 Cor. 5. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 1. 12, 21

Wherefore he ought to manage himself, not with Rage and Fury, but with a gravity and Majesty suitable to the office he sustains, and that will govern us in the *other* part of the Caution which I interposed, to use our *Victory, Mercifully.*

This is an admonition which I intend as a direction of good *Omen* against the next occasion; for if all the evils which unavoidably follow War, be not otherwise justifiable, then as they are necessary means to attain the End (which we always suppose lawful) we shall ever be obliged to do no more mischief to our Enemies, then is requisite for the obtaining that End; not permitting any provocation to bring Revenge into the Quarrel (which both *Christianity* and gallant *Heathenisme* abhor) but considering always rather what is *fit* for us to do, then what our enemies have *deserved* to suffer; for if the War be just, and the Victory cruel, we grow less by our advantage, gain a Conquest like *Valiant men*, and use it like *Cowards*; wherefore I rejoyce with all my heart, that seeing God gave us a Victory with the expence of so little *English* Blood, our Commanders were so generous as to shed *no* more *Dutch Blood* then they must needs, conquering their Enemies *twice*, first by *force*, then by *mercy*: This was to remember whose *Brother* their *Admiral* is, and *whose* Servants *they* are; nay, this was even in *hot* Blood, to remember themselves to be *Christians*, to be *merciful*, *as their Heavenly Father is merciful*,

who though he often chaſtiſeth ſinners very ſeverely, yet he calls that his *ſtrange work*, profeſſeth to go about it unwillingly and by conſtraint, and always inflicts leſs then hath been deſerved: *More* then this I could not have wiſhed, either to the *Victors*, or the *Victory*; and yet there is ſomething behinde, which doth adorn and crown both us and the bleſſings we rejoyce for: That *God* is the Author of all, *He* hath delivered, &c. The Second Part of the *Acknowledgment*.

I Hope no body will think it a diminution to the *courage* or *conduct*, which have ſo eminently appeared in this Action, that I aſcribe the ſucceſs to *God*: For what can ſo much dignifie any Mortal Man, as to be an Inſtrument in Gods hand, one whom he chuſeth to bring about great and glorious things by, through whoſe vertue and wiſdom he delights to convey Bleſſings and Deliverances to a Kingdom? Much leſs do I conceive it needful in this Auditory, to handle the point by way of *Theſis*, and prove *God* to be the Governor of Heaven and Earth; and therefore the *Giver* of all *Victory*. If any who queſtions this, be crowded into the *Chappel*, I muſt reſolutely profeſs not to Preach to *him*; ſuch we leave to their own *Mire*, knowing our *Pearls* are too precious to be caſt before them, and trodden under their impure feet? It will be a more pleaſant Task to me, and a more uſeful ſervice to you, that

I obſerve to you how God himſelf in many notable particulars of our *Caſe*, hath really preached this already, made *his arm bare*, and aſſerted his right to the glory of our Victory; which he ſeems to have ſtudiouſly contrived, and driven on with an affectionate concern, and an induſtrious active providence.

Let then any of thoſe unkinde men, who will not endure *God* to be favorable to their *Countrey*, when *they* are angry with it, Tell me who preſſed our *Enemies* with thoſe diſtreſſes which made it neceſſary for them to break through their Flegm and Warineſs, and their ſeeming Intereſt, to come out and purſue their evil fate in the hazard of a *Battail*; having no Merchandiſe to ſend abroad, or bring home; to fight onely for fightings ſake; and yet ſo infatuated their Councils, as to make them prevaricate their own deſign; to foreſlow the opportunity they had graſped at, neglect to *attack* us when ſeveral circumſtances of our condition invited them to an *Advantage*, but ſtay juſt till *His Majeſties* Fleet was ready and at leiſure to beat them, having taken in all the Proviſions they deſigned, and received a never to be forgotten opportune *Supply* from the immediate hand of *God*, which they could not deſign, nor hope for; A Fleet of *Colliers* coming by the very Squadrons of our Enemies Navy, and exchanging before their faces One thouſand freſh-men, for ſuch as ſickneſs and their long *fatigue* at Sea had made

made not ſo fit for preſent ſervice. They who had heard their brags, read their goodly *gazets*, where they threatned ſo valiantly, and talked of *ſeeking the Engliſh*, as if they had been ſome ſculking *Capers* hiding themſelves behinde every Rock, or in every little Creek that could ſhelter their fear and weakneſs; would have thought they ſhould improve the firſt occaſion to execute all their threats, and make good their Boaſtings; nay, when they were come in view of that Fleet, which they had been ſo long in finding, who held them back as with a Bridle, that they gave not the Onſet while the *Wind* was *fair*, to further their Aſſault, and make their *Fire-ſhips*, in which they truſted ſo much, uſeful to them? Further yet, who after all this, *turn'd* the *Wind* in the very time, when our Ships were with much labor and pains, brought to a poſſibility of beginning the fight, thereby making us Maſters of the Order and Manner of the enſuing Battail; beſides the rendring their great preparation of *Fire-ſhips*, but ſo many dead unprofitable Hulks; and our few, ſo dreadfully ſerviceable againſt them: How much more unbelieving is *Fanaticiſm* then *Infidelity*? An ingenuous *Heathen* would have diſcerned the Finger of God in ſuch operations, traced the footſteps of Providence in ſuch remarkable Inſtances; but they who would be thought the *Secretaries* of *Providence*, to be privy to all Gods hidden Councils, apprehend nothing that he doth, becauſe, *Prejudice* is

an *Idol*, which, whoſoever worſhips, becomes (as
Pſal. 115. the Prophet *David* ſays) like unto it; *They have eyes, and ſee not; ears have they, and hear not*; even ſtocks and ſtones are not more dull, then they who will not uſe their Sences, but ſtop their Ears like Adders; cloſe their Eyes, and ſtupifie their
Matt. 13: 15. Hearts, leſt they ſhould *perceive* and *underſtand*, and be converted and healed of thoſe Spiritual diſeaſes which have poſſeſſed their Souls.

But I go on, Let any of thoſe who will not allow the *King* and his *family*, to be within the care and protection of *God*, becauſe they have delivered them to Satan by their ſacrilegious *Anathema*'s, tell me what diſcriminating hand guided and kept that Bullet from the *Duke*, which made ſo lamentable a Carnage, even in three perſons by his ſide, onely ſuffering it to caſt a *hopeful* young *Noblemans* Blood
Exod. 12. 22, upon him, like that of the *Paſchal Lamb upon the*
23. *Iſraelites doors*, to direct the preſiding *Angels*, with whoſe ſafety they were intruſted, whom *they* ought to ſecure in the midſt of all ſlaughters. Once more, Let thoſe who *Frame Commonwealths* in *Coffee*, who have ſo often told their Credulous Auditors, That the Houſe of *Commons* might beat the *Dutch* (belike a new *Free-State* may deſtroy an old one, as the *Frogs* of this year, do thoſe of the laſt.) But no *King* ſhall prevail againſt *Holland*, and that God went out with thoſe Fleets, (though the *Dutch* were as good Fanaticks then, as they are at this day.)

But

But now the *caſe* is altered, the ſame men fighting for the *King*, are not the ſame in Gods ſight, becauſe not in theirs; and all their hearts ſhall melt as water, and their ſtrength become as Towe before the fire. Let them, I ſay, either give over to fume out their blaſphemies againſt God and the King, or ſatisfie us, who, but the Almighty, *All Good* God hath done the things before-mentioned, turned the cunning Counſels of our Adverſaries to folly, brought the Winds out of his Treaſures ſeaſonably to our aſſiſtance, and made the devouring Element of Fire, ſerve, as it were, in pay, and under the command of our Captains, given our Seamen ſinews of braſs to go through all labor; and *hearts* (to uſe the higheſt expreſſion) of *Loyal Engliſhmen*, to deſpiſe all danger. And laſtly, who, but that *Lord of Hoſts* (whoſe Providence, orders and ſuſtains the univerſe, and is viſible enough in all affairs: But moſt eminently conſpicuous in governing and diſpoſing the events of Wars:) could ſo defend them from the dangers which he gave them courage to deſpiſe, carrying them in the *hollow of his hand*, and covering all their heads in the day of *Battail*; ſo that onely 283 men were ſlain, of more then 30000 who fought ſo bravely and ſo long? *We praiſe thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. In thy hands are the iſſues of life and of death: Thou haſt bound up with thee, the Souls of thy ſervants in the bundle of Life, when the Souls of thoſe that hated us, were* Iſai. 40. 12.

ſlung

Sam. 25. 8. *ſlung out as from the middle of a Sling.* Thou haſt delivered us from all our *trouble*, and made our eyes to ſee their deſire upon our *enemies*. Therefore an offering of free-hearts *will we give thee, and praiſe thy Name, becauſe it is ſo comfortable.* And ſo I am come to the other part of our duty.

THe imitating *David* in an affectionate hearty return of worſhip and ſervice to God, in conſideration of his mercies. *An offering of a free-heart will I give thee, and will praiſe thy Name, &c.*

That which *David* here promiſeth, is an entire *freewil offering*; which conſiſted of two neceſſary parts. *Oblation* and *Prayer*, or *Praiſe*. For as *God* commanded his then people in general, never *to appear before him empty*, not to addreſs any Prayer or Praiſe to him without a gift in their hands, *honoring him with their ſubſtance*, as well as with their hearts and tongues. So did he preſcribe, that all *Peace-offerings* (whereof thoſe voluntary offerings were one kinde) ſhould be accompanied with a ſolemn Confeſſion or Thankſgiving for the *Peace*, that is (in their language) all worldly bleſſings which they had received from Gods favor. And when the caſe required it, a Petition for thoſe they wanted: As we read in the Order for *Firſt-fruits* and *Tythings*, which were commanded *Heave-offerings*; and the relation of *David* and his Princes

Exod. 23. 15. Deut. 16. 16.

Deut. 26. 6, 9, 15.

Voluntary-

Voluntary-offering of *Gold* and *Silver* for building up the Temple. 1 Chro. 29.

Before I ſpeak of the Parts by themſelves, give me leave, by the way, to obſerve, That even in that *Oeconomy* wherein God deſcended to a minute-preſcription of every part and circumſtance of his worſhip: Yet he left room and invitation for ſome *ſervices* to be *voluntarily* and freely performed, as the inſtinct of their own devotion ſhould prompt them to it; which muſt make it ſtrange, that any ſhould affirm it unlawful for the Chriſtian Church, which is in that behalf left ſo much at liberty and diſcretion, to ſerve God with any thing which is not by himſelf enjoyned; and withal, put us in minde, that although (God knows) we are all far from being able to accompliſh the whole of what is commanded us: Yet he muſt be a very ſtupid obſerver of Gods mercies, or his own need of them, who ſhall not ſometime finde a warmth and zeal exciting him to particular expreſſions of his love to God, and ſorrow for ſin, in inſtances not *expreſly* commanded, but flowing from the abundance of his own heart: And if ever that be fit for us, it is certainly moſt becoming upon *ſuch great* occaſions as now, when God hath poured out the riches and treaſures of his mercy ſo abundantly upon us. For all which we cannot but of our penury return him ſome *Mites*; poor, but hearty *Oblations* and *Thanksgivings*, which the ſame Goodneſs that calls for them, will alſo accept.

I be-

I begin with our Praiſes and Thankſgivings; and to that part of our return, methinks we ſhould ſoon be perſwaded; it being ſo eaſie and ſo cheap a ſervice, to ſpeak well and honorably of him that is all Good, will coſt us no labor or ſtudy; the ſubject will looſe the ſtrings of our Tongues and make us eloquent. Hoſ. 14. 2. And to offer him the *Calves of our lips* will coſt us no money: If our *Praiſes may aſcend as Incenſe*, and the lifting up our voice be an acceptable *Evening Sacrifice*, the thriftieſt Votary will afford God ſo much.

YEt here is in the Text a more inviting Argument, *I will praiſe thy name, becauſe it is ſo comfortable*; or as our new Tranſlation reads, *for it is good.* It is a duty as delectable and pleaſant as it is eaſie, it is *lovely*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 135. *It is a good thing to ſing praiſes unto our God*; *yea, a joyful and pleaſant thing it is to be thankful*, *Pſal.* 147. So graciouſly God deals with us, expecting nothing from our hands, which ſhall not be as delightful to us, as acceptable to him. Certainly, next to that *tranſcendent* pleaſure of conferring benefits, nothing is ſo joyous to an ingenuous heart, as to *celebrate* the munificence of a Benefactor. The one is the Prerogative of Gods infinite Power and Majeſty, he onely is the Univerſal Benefactor *that opens his hand, and fills all things living with plenteouſneſs.* The other he leaves to us, to glory, triumph, and ſolace

Pſal. 135. 3.

Pſal. 147. 1.

our

our ſelves in the contemplation and praiſing his goodneſs, that is, doing the ſame thing here which ſhall be the perfection of our happineſs in Heaven, to do eternally: But why ſhould I importune you to that which you are about already; your *thankfulneſs* to God hath brought you hither, and your buſineſs here, is to expreſs that thankfulneſs, and pour out your hearts before God, which are full of his mercies, and long to eaſe and empty themſelves in all the expreſſions of Love and Joy, and *boaſting in the Lord*, as *David* ſpeaks, *all the day long*: Methinks I ſee a Thankſgiving in the looks of my Auditory, as *Solomon* ſays, when *the heart rejoyceth*, there will be a Spring *and flowery gayetie* in the *outward viſage*: That active ſprightly Paſſion, will not be *ſuppreſſed* or *diſſembled*, but breaks out and dilates it ſelf, caſting a luſtre and kind of Glory upon the Countenance; and ſo it ought to be: He that appears here to day without a *Feſtival face* and *heart*, is like him in the Goſpel that came to the *Marriage Feaſt without a Wedding Garment*, deſerves to be caſt out to the torments of his own envy, and deprived of thoſe good things which he repines at, or deſpiſeth: But yet give me leave to tell you from *a good Author*, that true joy is a *ſevere* thing; and to add, that ours is a *Religious* one too. You heard bebefore that joyful praiſing of God is the work of Angels and Bleſſed Souls in Heaven, and therefore we muſt perform it with affections and demeanors

εὐφραινομένη καρδίας θάλλα πρόσωπον. Prov. 15. 3.

Matt. 22.

Seneca.

as like them as may be, remembring *who* gave the occaſion of our Joy, and to whom we profeſs to direct the expreſſions of it.

I ſpeak not this to ſuppreſs the jollity of the Town, to ſilence *Bells*, and extinguiſh *Bonfires*, or diſcourage any other hearty innocent Feſtivities; but I would have you conſider that thoſe Triumphs are not the main work of this *Day*, which calls for more ſolid Rejoycings, ſuitable to the benefit and the Author of it: Beſides I cannot diſſemble, that I have ſuch
Job 1. 5. a jealouſie over you, as *Job* had over his children *when they feaſted*, leſt any of you indulge to extravagancy, or ſlide into a Sin, forget what you are doing, and offend God while you praiſe him. Saint *Paul* exhorts women to a modeſt retir'd Garb, becauſe of the *Angels*, by which ſome underſtand good, ſome bad Angels: I muſt beſeech all you to carry your ſelves warily this day, becauſe of both; you know what will pleaſe good Spirits, and I can tell you what ſome bad Spirits pleaſe themſelves with before hand: Look too't, the *Fanaticks* ſay already, our *Thanksgiving*, though begun in the *Church*, will end in the Tavern, and we muſt conquer the *Dutch* over again in *Sack*: For ſhame do not gratifie them, and diſhonor your ſelves ſo far as to take any part of your joy from that whence your enemies take their valor; you could fight without *Brandy*, I hope you can give thanks without it too: A *ſober* Courage, and *drunken* devotion, is ſo vile a

contra-

contradiction, as I can find no name bad enough to call it by: This will put you to it, and discover whether you believe your selves, when you profess to have received your Victory from God; if it be his gift it must be received with Reverence, and entertained with Spiritual Holy rejoycing; not Sensual Revellings, and Bacchanal Rites: If you think God the Author of all your success, you will so comport your selves, as that he may continue and increase his favor to you; you know the *Evangelist* tells you, there were some persons on whom Christ could not do so many *Miracles* as he *would*, because *of their indisposition*: And I must tell you, we may so indispose our selves, as that God cannot do us the good he desires; mercy it self will restrain him, because it would be cruelty, not kindness, to cast away blessings on those who abuse them to their hurt, corrupt and envenome his grace by turning it into wantonness. But that I may not seem too severe, I will shew you how you may safely let your affections loose without danger of excess or intemperance, and profitably spend what I desire you to spare; make that a sweet smelling Sacrifice to God, which otherwise might provoke his wrath, by being a fuel to your sin: It is by perfecting and compleating the Free-will-offering in my Text, adding the *Oblation* to the Praise and Thanksgiving. The last thing I will mention, and but mention. Marc. 6. 5.

THE *Free-will Offering* was part given to God, and part ſpent in feſtival entertainment of Men. For Gods part, perhaps, you will think your ſelves ſecure, and well diſcharged of it, becauſe all Sacrifices are abolifhed under the Goſpel. 'Tis true, all the Ceremonial Typical Sacrifices of the *Law* are ſo: But why ſuch an Act of Natural Religion, as preſenting God with ſome part of the good things he hath given us, in acknowledgment of his bounty, and as an expreſſion of our Thankfulneſs, ſhould be thought a piece of antiquated *Judaiſm*, I know not; eſpecially, if we conſider, that *Abel* offered ſuch an oblation, and God accepted it, many Ages before he ſpake any thing to the *Jews* concerning *Sacrifice*. And we Chriſtians have ſo much more to thank God for then they had who lived before or under the Law. Certainly, *Chriſt*, when he commanded us to ſerve God with all our heart, and all our ſtrength, meant not to interdict our ſerving him with ſome part of our ſubſtance. Surely, the firſt *Chriſtians* thought ſo, who in their Celebration of the *Euchariſt* made always an Oblation in *Kind*, of Bread and Wine, and other Proviſions; part whereof was conſecrated for the Sacrament, and part eaten in a common Feaſt of Charity among themſelves. And we ſtill, as far as we obey the Commands of the Church, preſerve ſome footſteps

footsteps of this Practice, in our offering for the use of the *Poor* (in whom God's hand is every where held out to receive our free-will Offerings) before the *Communion*. But not to enter into new occasion of Discourse in the end of my Sermon: We know that God, even when he commanded *Sacrifices*, regarded them not for themselves, as the Prophets often tell the *Jews*; and *David* himself *Psal.* 50. very particularly rejects them all: But in the same *Psalm* tells us what Offerings God will always be delighted with, *Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows*. Thanks and Praises will be an acceptable honour, and ordering our Conversation aright will procure Salvation: Which the *Chaldee paraphraseth* thus; *Repress thy evil desire, and it shall be accepted as a Sacrifice of Confession.* To mortifie a *Lust*, is to slay a *Goat*, and more. To lay your hand upon a brutish Affection, as they did theirs upon a Beast, devoutly giving it up, abandoning it freely for Gods sake, is the noblest Wave-offering imaginable. This is S. *Pauls* Counsel to *present your selves a lively Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is a reasonable* Christian *service*. I doubt not but many *Vows* were made to this purpose in the time of danger; and *another* Death now round about us calls loud for performance of them, and making more: Gods hand upon us assures me, some evil desires he would extort from us by so severe a method; and happy we,

Verse 14. 23

Rom. 12. 1.

we, if casting that from us which is worse then Death, will redeem us from the *Plague*; if our Sins themselves may be the matter of an Expiatory Sacrifice; if the price of a vanity or folly, a crime or a shame, may purchase an Atonement with Heaven; and that it may, if sacrificing our evil desires as an Oblation to God, we will bestow that wherewith we use to foment them, upon our poor Brethren; that will compleat our Free-will Offering: Give God his part, and Men theirs; make our *indigent* Neighbours, the members of Christ, rejoyce with us; that which fed our gluttony, and was a provocation, when spent in our intemperate meals, being put into the bellies of the Poor, may plead our Pardon, and procure Mercy for Mercy; our superfluity bestowed on their wants, may make up our defects with God; the Charge of our vain costly Apparel imployed to cloath the naked, may hide our nakedness and deformity in Gods sight, our *Charity* may *cover a multitude of sins.* This is a proper Exercise at every *Thanksgiving*, but *now* extremely seasonable when the *Sickness* falls chiefly upon poor People: 'Tis fear'd, many of them perish for want of what money would buy, and spread the Infection by their desperate breaking out at all hazards rather then be shut up and starve. I hope these Considerations improved by your own Piety, will make your Free-will Offering liberal and bountiful; make

make your Charity swell, and over-flow those banks wherewith avarice and hard-heartedness use to inclose it; and that no man will go *out* of Town without leaving a Blessing behind him, that he may carry one with him.

I conclude with our Royal Prophets Prayer, "O Lord God of Heaven, keep this and all thy "former Mercies *for ever in the imagination of the* 1 Chron. 29. 18. "*thoughts of the hearts of thy people*: and prepare and "establish their hearts unto thee, that our Thanks- "giving end not with the Day; but that we may "always thankfully serve and praise Thee, till thou "remove us hence to praise Thee to all Eternity in "Heaven.

FINIS.